

*For Iris Lovers in the Cold Zones*



# Aurora

Newsletter of the Can-West Iris Society

Spring, 2015

Volume 9, Issue 1

## Update From the Organizing Committee

Can it be? Is spring really here? Although it is still too early to remove mulch, it is so nice to see the new growth starting out in the gardens. Not so nice, however, to see the iris heaving from prolonged freeze and thaw cycles so if you haven't already, it might be prudent to have a look at the iris patch and see if there are any that require resetting. You can also start looking (and sniffing) for the first signs of rot. This is the season where Comet is your best friend.

The highlight of the spring newsletter is the member profile and I am sure you will enjoy reading all about Len Giesbrecht's gardens and their evolution along with some of his beautiful photos on pages 2-6. A last call reminder about the AIS National and the Siberian Iris Conventions in Portland next month is on page 7 followed by show information and details on a show supplementary activity planned, a not formally judged display design section headed up by Jennifer Bishop on pages 8 -10. We are very excited to have Trails End Iris Gardens formally on board as co-sponsor for the Best in Show prize. For the show sale table, we are always looking for donations so have a look to see if you are able to donate a few.

Next is a plea for Miniature Dwarf Bearded photos from Terry Laurin on behalf of the Iris Encyclopedia (TWIKI) on pages 11-12 and finally, take advantage of the opportunity for an educational experience with a hands on iris workshop June 6th at Carberry Gardens that has been organized by member Penny Shaw. Check out the details on page 13.

If your CWIS membership expired in 2014, this will be your last newsletter. Please contact B. J. about your membership status if you aren't sure.

So sit back, relax with your beverage of choice and enjoy this first newsletter of 2015. Comments, suggestion and advice for future issues are always welcome.

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# Member Profile: Len Giesbrecht

(In His Own Words)

*Editor: Len is a charter member of CWIS who gardens in the St. Norbert area of Winnipeg, Manitoba.*

*Len at the CWIS's first show  
in 2008 with his winning  
entry of IB Eramosa Miss*



I am now an avid gardener but have to say this was not always the case. About 25 years ago we bought a home in St. Norbert. Big yard, lots of grass and big spruce trees. I was a Golfer. I went Fishing/Camping. I went to work, came home and mowed the lawn... I always had a neat lawn but if there were flowers in the yard it was my wife Rita's doing, not mine. In other words a normal suburban husband/father.

Then Rita decided she wanted a Rock Garden with a stream and pond beside the garage and I have learned sometimes it's easier to do what she wants than to argue with her. So, I hauled in loads of soil to build up the bed, brought in lots... lots of rocks and gravel for the edge and the stream. I sank the top pond, made the stream and installed the larger bottom pond. Then we put in all kinds of plants and stood back to admire our work. It was good. Rita was happy and I... well, I was hooked.

I started with Irises, you know, the ordinary yellow/brown and white/purple ones. If a neighbor had one with a slightly different color combination I would make a trade. Then, a pivotal stage in my life as a gardener happened. I used to go to our St. Norbert Farmers Market on Saturday mornings to get fresh pastry for

breakfast and found a vendor that sold some SDB Irises, Cherry Garden, Brass Ring, Doll Ribbons... nothing special in today's terms but to my eyes at the time they were awesome. I started looking for more wherever I could find them. SDBs, TBs, IBs... didn't matter, I had to have them, if it was just another yellow and had a different name I had to have it. Rita called me a "name snob" but it didn't matter, I was into the hundreds in no time.

I love the TBs for the statement they make, even though the newer ones may not all be the hardiest here. There are lots that are and it's just a matter of finding the right ones. I do grow the older "heritage" TBs, beautiful blooms and reliable. They always perform. SDBs may be my favorites though. They are reliably hardy and vigorous, they multiply rapidly and make a nice show in the gardens. I have also become a real fan of the Intermediate Irises, taller than the SDBs and great garden flowers.

Chuck Chapman, a Canadian hybridizer has been working on reblooming Irises for some years and I have a number of his introductions. It is always a real thrill to see the Iris reblooming a second time. Forever Blue has to be one of my favorite Chapman rebloomers.



I have frequently been asked what my favorite Iris is. I used to try to decide but now I just say, "the one I am looking at that moment". I do have colors that I prefer, I love brown flowers, Henna Stitches and Copatonic will always have a place in my gardens. Blue Eyed Blonde and Mikey Likes it always draw visitors from across the yard. I have also become a real fan of variegated Iris, Minnesota Mixed Up Kid and Blueberry Filly are two great examples.





Of course, if all you grow are Iris I soon realized that after bloom season your garden looked pretty dismal. So I moved into Daylilies. It covered the late summer/fall season and I was soon an avid Daylily collector as well. I then added Lilies to cover the mid-summer and now I had Irises for Spring/Summer, Lilies for the mid-summer and Daylilies for the Fall. Pretty much every day I go out there something new is blooming.





I guess I am more a collector rather than a gardener. We garden on an ordinary city lot and it didn't take that long to run out of flower bed space. The tall Spruce in the front yard were evicted, new beds created and soon that too was



filled. I had to do something, I was out of room. I started to cull my plants, if I had multiple Iris that looked very similar, and I did have many situations like that... I selected the one or two I liked best and moved the other ones out. If you had to hold a flower up to another to tell them apart... I didn't need them both. It did work, to a point, I then adopted a "one in, one out" program. If I brought a new plant in another had to leave. I do admit I had some tough arguments with myself and it did not always work but I did get a certain amount of control over the situation. These days, the new Iris, Lily or Daylily has to have something different, be it bloom time i.e.; early or late, height, color, ruffles, doubles, whatever. It has to have something that sets it apart. I even have a few empty spots in the beds! Of course, Rita has been bringing in Hosta the last few years and I'm starting to like them.... Oh, oh.



# **Last Call!**

## **2015 Conventions!**



### ***IRIS IN WONDERLAND 2015***

**AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY CONVENTION  
PORTLAND, OREGON, MAY 18-23, 2015**

**AND**

### ***ANOTHER DAY IN THE GARDEN***

**SIBERIAN/SPECIES CONVENTION 2015  
PORTLAND, OREGON, MAY 24/25, 2015**

**Information and registration information for AIS convention is available at:**

**[http://www.irises.org/Member\\_Services/2015\\_Convention.html](http://www.irises.org/Member_Services/2015_Convention.html)**

**Registration form for the Siberian Convention is available at:**

**<http://ais2015portlandconvention.com/SiberianRegistrationForm2015.pdf>**



**SDB  
Mikey Likes It**

# 8th Annual Show - Can-West Iris Society

**Sunday, June 14th, 2015**

**Bourkevale Community Centre**

**100 Ferry Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**Admission is free and we are open to the public from 1 to 4 p.m.**

**Show Chair: B.J. Jackson, [jacksonb@mts.net](mailto:jacksonb@mts.net)**

Exhibitor information is available in the full show schedule you will have received in a separate file along with this newsletter. It can also be downloaded from the website at: <http://cwis.webplus.net/> Just click on "Go There" under 2015 show schedule. If you would like show tags to prepare prior to the show, please contact the show chair and they will be sent out to you via Canada Post. A review of everything you need to know about entering stems can be found in the Spring 2008 newsletter at:

<http://cwis.webplus.net/CWIS%20spring%202008%20newsletter.pdf>

We are looking for volunteers, too, so if you have an hour or two to spare please let us know. We cannot do what we do without your support. Assistance is required with everything from setting up tables to organizing and setting out display containers, greeting visitors in the afternoon, helping out in the kitchen or at the rhizome sale table, etc. Just let us know when you are available and we will find a job for you! The rhizome sale table can always use your donations, too, so please have a look and see if you have anything to donate. This sale has become a good fund raiser for CWIS so please consider donating to our worthy cause.



*IB Sailor in BJ Jackson's garden. This lovely  
graces the cover of the 2015 Show Schedule.  
Photo courtesy BJ Jackson*

And back this year is a display design class for all you aspiring flower arrangers. Jennifer Bishop will be overseeing this part of the show.



We had several designs at our first show in 2008 thanks to members Susan LeBlanc and Debbie Innes so we decided to do it again! It proved to be very popular then and I am very confident it will be so again this year. Here are some from 2008:



Jennifer writes:

If you would like to design with me, I will be at the hall at 7 am with all my design materials. I will bring different flowers and foliage you can use as well as a variety of different containers but feel free to bring your own stuff if you wish. Alternatively, you can do your designs at home and bring them down. Since they do not have to be staged for judging, they can be put on the table any time before judging starts or after judging before we open to public. Please call me at 204 771 6169 if you would like to participate and want more information. You can discuss your flower and/or foliage needs at the same time so I know what to bring with me. I'm also willing to share my various design materials with anyone who wants to use them.

This design division is for display only and will not be judged formally. The show committee will, however, be offering a prize to one design that receives the most votes from those attending the show. When you register, you will be given a number and that number will identify you as an exhibitor. Official entry tags are not required for this division but designs will need a number for voting purposes.

Here's the basics:

1. Display Only – will not be formally judged, only enjoyed and admired by all.

- Designs can be given a name by the designer if desired -- ex: display with Yellow Iris could be call 'In the Sun'
  - Flowers and foliage do not have to be grown by the designer and can be purchased if needed
  - No artificial arrangements please
  - Design must contain at least 1 Iris and may contain any other fresh flowers and foliage
2. The purpose is to show the variety within the different types of Iris and how they can be successfully used to create beautiful designs.
  3. Iris do not have to meet any judging standard, ie. perfection is not required.
  4. Links provided below are given as information only and not as standards – just to show different designs and styles possible:

I have included the AIS Design section for reference only or if someone wants to develop their skill level for judged designing:

[http://www.irises.org/Member\\_Services/ais\\_toolbox-Design-Themes.html](http://www.irises.org/Member_Services/ais_toolbox-Design-Themes.html)

I have included other links with images of different designs using Iris -- If you can design with other flowers, you can design with Iris!:

<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=foral%20design%20arrangements%20Iris&qs=n&form=QBIR&pq=foral%20design%20arrangements%20iris&sc=0-0&sp=-1&sk=&ajf=10>

<http://interior-design.wonderhowto.com/how-to/design-elegant-iris-arrangement-for-your-home-316949/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ju58QwYXxIM&feature=youtu.be>



# **Miniature Dwarf Bearded (MDB) Irises**

## **In Search of the ‘Little Ones’**

*(by Terry Laurin, TWIKI Photo Manager)*

As Lewis Carroll’s Alice once pondered in ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland’, “What is the use of a book without pictures or conversations?”

This sentiment now holds true for websites, in particular the AIS Iris Encyclopedia, also known as the AIS TWIKI or TWIKI. If you have been on the TWIKI you will know that descriptions and photographs are provided for as many iris cultivars as possible. These descriptions have a greater impact if accompanied by a picture. However last year it was determined that 85% of the MDB cultivars had only one or no picture at all. At this point the Dwarf Iris Society (DIS) would like to make an appeal for pictures to anyone who grows MDBs...or ‘the little ones’.

Do you have pictures of MDBs in a photo album, or in an old shoebox, taken when Kodachrome was the medium of the day? Do you have pictures of MDBs taken in your garden that just sit on a SD card or computer? If you answered ‘yes’ to either of these questions you should read on.

A list of the MDB cultivars which require pictures has been added to the Ontario Iris Society website, <https://sites.google.com/site/ontarioirissociety/>, under Miniature Dwarf Iris Picture Project. You don’t have to limit yourself to the irises on the list. If you have any pictures of MDB irises you can upload them to the TWIKI. Single flower or clump shots are acceptable.

If you have digital photographs you can add them to the AIS TWIKI yourself. Simply register for a user ID and password and you will be allowed to add pictures. To do this, find the cultivar and click on the ‘attach’ button. You will be guided through the process. Please ensure the picture you are uploading matches the description given.

If you have paper photographs and you have a scanner, you can scan them to your computer as JPGs and upload them to the TWIKI as above.



If you have slides, and you know someone with a slide scanner, you can have them converted to JPGs and added to the TWIKI. According to Janet Smith, AIS Coordinator of Digital Programs/Slides, try different dpi (dots per inch) settings. “Some slides don't like 600 dpi or above. Some work better at 300 dpi. If you only want the photo for computer work you can go lower than 300 dpi. Take one slide and see what it looks like at different settings.”

A word of caution, please do not upload pictures that are not your own without the owner's permission. This is against TWIKI policy.

If you don't have the time to upload but want to share your pictures you can send your JPGs to me via email ([tlaurin@rogers.com](mailto:tlaurin@rogers.com)). If you want a copyright on the picture you can do this yourself or let me know what copyright you want and I will enter it for you. JPGs should be 500 to 1000 pixels in size.

Your assistance with this project will go a long way towards raising the profile of MDBs on the AIS TWIKI. If you have any questions, please contact me at [tlaurin@rogers.com](mailto:tlaurin@rogers.com).



*CWIS partnered with the Canadian Iris Society and shared a booth with the Manitoba Regional Lily Society at Gardening Saturday March 28th in Winnipeg.*

**Event Notice:**  
**Iris Workshop**  
**Saturday, June 6, 2015 - 2 pm**  
**at the Carberry Gardens**

Carberry Horticulture Society and Can-West Iris Society cordially invite your participation in an iris digging and dividing workshop this spring. We are digging iris previously donated by CWIS to the Carberry Gardens for the sale table at the show and have decided to make an educational opportunity out of this activity. BJ Jackson of CWIS will be conducting the workshop with the assistance and support of Penny Shaw, a CWIS member, and the Carberry Horticulture Society.



*Its time to divide some iris at  
the Carberry Gardens*

Light afternoon refreshments will be served and we are hoping for good weather!

Please join us and take advantage of this opportunity. Bring along your lawn chairs and meet us at the gardens. They are located straight south from the intersection of Highway 1 (TCH) and Highway 5 to Wheatland Drive. On the left is Carberry Signs where you can park. Just watch for the Carberry Sign. You can't miss it. For further information, please call or text BJ Jackson at 204 761 3973.

We look forward to seeing you there!